

Peter and Daphne

By MAUNA COWLES

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"Peter, Peter!"

It was the high-pitched, reproving voice of Alice, the youngest of the three sisters. Peter in question had come home to enjoy the leisure of a Saturday half-holiday. A new book, a magazine or two, a pipe and a chaise longue on the awning-sheltered terrace had left Peter feeling the content of a mild summer afternoon. Alice's reproving "Peter, Peter," was the cloud floating by on the cloudless sky. For, ever since Peter had been brought up as the youngest child in a household of three older sisters, he had become accustomed to having all his scoldings and reproving begin with just these two words.

There was never any mistaking about the nature of the comments to follow, so Peter said: "Well, what's the matter? What have I done to displease your majesty?" Alice was only a year older than Peter and he especially objected to her reproaches.

"Peter, dear," she said, taking a seat near him. "I saw you downtown this noon, and Peter, Peter—there was a hole in your stocking. I was walking behind you and honestly I saw the hole first and wondered what sort of man could be so careless, and then I realized that it was our darling Peter."

"Thanks," said Peter. "I'll change 'em before dinner." He began reading furiously and Alice moved into the background of the garden beyond.

Half an hour before dinner Peter went to his room to freshen up, and a good fifteen minutes of that time was spent searching through bureau drawers in search of a pair of hole-less socks. At length he found a pair, one solitary pair among fifty pairs or so that were more or less unsound.

"I can manage to wear these to-morrow and Monday," reflected Peter, "and I'll get one of the girls to mend some up on Monday."

So Monday morning he approached the middle sister, Janet.

"If you haven't anything else to do, some time today," he began with what he thought considerable diplomacy, "you might mend a few of the best of the socks I've laid out on my bed. I've such a stack of them that I don't like the idea of buying any more, so if you haven't anything else to do—"

Janet interrupted:

"Peter, Peter," she began in dulcet but reproving tones. "That's just like a man. He assumes because a woman has no regular business that she hasn't anything to do. I can assure you that when I marry Tom he'll have to look at things from a different angle. Really, it is so ridiculous. Men spend fortunes educating and cultivating women. They send them to college, have their voices trained, have them learn all the arts and all the graces and then they say: 'Since you haven't anything else to do, please darn my socks.' Really, Peter, I don't want to be disagreeable. It's the principle of the thing. When I want my automobile painted or re-tired I don't get you to do it. I take it to a garage, because I know you have something else to do. I don't even darn my own stockings and I don't intend to darn Tom's, so I don't see why I should take on yours."

Peter excused himself from the feminine circle of sisters a little early. In his own sitting room he unwrapped a small parcel containing darning cotton and silk, a large thimble and a paper of needles. The girl at the notion counter of a department store had told him that this was the necessary paraphernalia. Then he sat erect and uncomfortable by the side of his reading table and tried to master the art of darning, assuring himself that there was no use in discarding fifty pairs of socks just because each pair needed a very little darning.

There was a rap on his door. But before Peter had time to gather his mending equipment together sister Maud had come in.

"Peter, Peter," said Maud, scorn in her voice and in her eyes. "I can't imagine a brother of mine doing anything like that. I thought you were a regular man, but I see you aren't. I hope that you don't tell our friends that you have to mend your own stockings!"

Peter gathered the socks and the mending things together with a hang-dog look and then asked his sister to take a seat. But Maud did not. She had been too seriously shocked.

The next Saturday afternoon Peter made a neat package containing ten or fifteen pairs of socks and fared forth. He was going to try and find some oldish person who would be willing to darn socks if well paid. He had no idea where he was going to find one. He started thinking so an inspiration might come. But he saw anything like an inspiration had

come he spied his three sisters coming up the street. No street to turn down lay between him and the trio. One of them, probably Janet, a true daughter of Eve, was sure to ask him what was in the package. Peter looked about for somewhere to vanish. Just ahead stood the Coledge house with a wide veranda stretching inviting awnings out to him. He turned into the driveway, and was mounting the first steps of the veranda when he gallantly doffed his hat to his sisters, doubtless consumed with curiosity to know why he was calling at the Coledges'.

Daphne Coledge came out to him.

lent, reclined reading on a chaise-longue. It occurred to Peter that their ideas of passing a pleasant summer afternoon were identical. Daphne rose and met him, offered her hand with much cordiality, and bade him sit down. She took a straight little bent hickory chair near him.

"I'm so glad you came," she said. "I was just wishing somebody very, very nice would come. Do you know you haven't been to see me for the longest time?"

Peter stammered something about never making calls any way.

"But why should you?" said Daphne. "With three charming sisters at home you don't need to. I'm afraid you're too content, Peter."

Daphne was a very pretty girl and nobody who knew her took her blandishments very seriously. Still Peter was stirred with a feeling of self-esteem. This very charming young woman was apparently glad to see him. To be sure he hadn't called on her much lately. When he did the sisters always reproved. Sometimes they said: "Peter, Peter, I am afraid that you are taking Daphne seriously. She is a desperate little flirt."

Peter didn't tell Daphne this. They talked of a number of things for ten minutes. Daphne had been eyeing his bundle, resting on the floor beside him.

"Peter, I'm dying to know what's in that package. You didn't bring me some candy, did you?"

"I'm so sorry," stammered Peter. "Well, I may as well tell you. That package contains some socks that need mending. I was trying to find some seamstress or something that would darn them for me. I thought maybe you'd tell me of some one."

"You poor dear," said Daphne very sweetly. "You have three sisters—and no one to darn your socks. If I had a brother—but then I'm not clever like your sisters," Daphne paused, and her lovely eyes dropped. Then she looked up at Peter temptingly. "I don't happen to know a seamstress—but, really, I'd be so happy if you'd let me darn them for you. Will you?" She hesitated, and as Peter did not object she reached out for the package and put it in the chair beside him.

"Daphne, you're too good," Peter heard himself saying, looking intently in her face. He was wondering whether she was having immense sport with him or whether really she cared for him. Any man living would give his right hand to possess the love of Daphne Coledge. He had never taken her very seriously because it never occurred to him that he had a chance among all her admirers.

"Peter—Peter dear," Daphne said, "why are you looking at me like that?"

"I was just trying to see whether you were making fun of me."

Daphne's mouth drooped like that of a disappointed child. "Making fun of you!" she said. "Peter, Peter, how can you ask? I have asked to darn your socks. I'll darn these and as many more as you want me to. I don't know any one else I would do that for."

"Daphne, do you mean that?" Events in Peter's life had been rushing forward at such a furious speed within the last quarter of an hour that he could hardly get his bearings. Here was the most beautiful girl in the world giving him an opportunity to say things that he had never dreamed he would have a chance to say. She was willing to darn his socks always. Could anything be more pointed?

"Daphne, dearie, Daphne," Peter said, seizing her hand that offered no resistance. "Daphne, I love you to distraction. I always have loved you. Could you ever love me?"

"Ever love you?" said Daphne, and her limp little shoulders shook with sobs and her free hand dried tears that welled in her eyes. "Peter, I've always loved you—you and no one else. Peter, Peter, you have been so blind."

No Inducement.

"Rejected you, did she? Did you tell her you could support her in the style she was accustomed to?"

"Yes, but she said she was looking for something better than that."

And Consultations Are Frequent.

Marks—My wife always consults me about every article of attire she buys—hats, shoes, gloves, everything.

Parks—My wife does, too; that is, she asks me for the money.



MORE THAN ONE WAY

A gentleman with a sensitive and cultivated ear was annoyed by the persistent and wretched piano playing of a woman who occupied the adjoining flat. One day he met her in the hall with her four-year-old daughter.

"Your little girl plays quite well for a child of her age," he remarked in his most friendly manner. "I hear her practicing every day."

The offender made sure he was out when she opened the piano again.

Deserved Reward.

"What's going on here?" "A column conductor is being presented with a loving cup by his admiring constituents."

"What inspired such an unusual demonstration?"

"He has never imitated Peppy's diary or written a parody on 'Mary's Little Lamb.'"

Hard to Discourage.

"Senator, there is a man outside who looks like a job hunter."

"Tell him to come back tomorrow."

"He says he hasn't eaten in two days."

"That won't keep him from coming back. He'll show up here if he has to be brought in on a stretcher."

Accommodating.

Lady—Before I take you I must know if you're engaged.

Lena—Ma'am, do you mean if I have a feller.

Lady—Yes.

Lena—No, ma'am, I haven't, but I can soon get one, if you like it.

Unfortunate!

"After he fell off the car and was found to be badly injured, what did the plaintiff say?" a witness was asked.

Witness—He said: "Confound it, and I've paid my fare right on to Oxford!" —London Tit-Bits.

Soft Soap Still Effective.

"Hubby, a writer in Blank's Magazine says that wives should get wages. Don't you think they should?" "Of course, my dear, but there isn't money enough in the whole world to pay you." Then she smiled and went on washing the dishes.



PERISH THE THOUGHT

The Dog Fancier: Yes'm, that's a bide ribbon Pekingese. Pedigree goes back to the time of the Ming dynasty. I tell you, ma'am, a dog like that's not to be sneezed at."

The Dog Lover: I should say not. He might catch something dreadful from a sneeze.

Normal.

A normal boy
Is Willie Spratt.
He's always asking:
"Where's my hat?"

There's a Big Difference.

"Look in the Congressional Record if you want to see what Representative Twobbie is doing."

"That wouldn't help me any."

"No?"

"That only tells what he's saying."

Anything Goes.

"You'll have to entertain the guests. Exert yourself."

"I know an Irish joke."

"Is it fit for mixed company?"

"It's fit for mixed company nowadays."

Both Out—Calling.

He—Where were you last night?

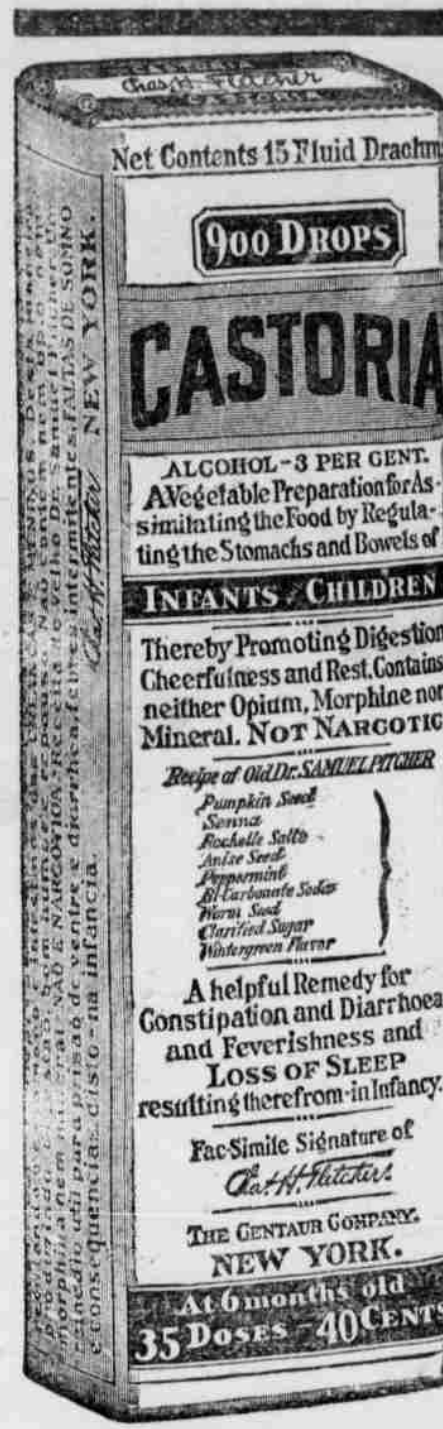
She—Out. I called on a newly married pair. Where were you?"

He—I was out, too. I called on a pair of nines.

More Artistic.

"The feminine voice is now being heard in politics," said the positive woman.

"I'm glad of it," replied Senator Sorghum. "The effect is more artistic when the cheers at a mass meeting have the benefit of sopranos in bringing out the harmony."



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GIANT AMONG THE PLANETS

Jupiter's Diameter Calculated to Be Ten Times That of the Earth We Live On.

If you look at the southeastern part of the sky as soon as it is dark, you cannot help seeing the giant planet Jupiter, for it is by far the brightest object in that part of the heavens.

Quite near it, rather higher and a little to the right, is Saturn, the second largest of the worlds which hurry around our sun.

Each of them has quite a family of moons. Jupiter owns nine and Saturn ten! Many of them are about the same size as our own satellite. Saturn has, in addition, a wonderful system of rings which lie inside the path of its nearest moon and these must stretch across their night sky in a great band of light.

Both of these planets are gigantic fellows. Jupiter's diameter is about ten times that of our own earth, but so quickly does it spin that a day lasts only nine hours and fifty minutes. When Jupiter becomes inhabited—it is still too hot for life to exist—those who live on its surface will be quite different creatures from ourselves. We should find it impossible to stand erect on this great planet owing to the enormous force of gravity.



WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN
Patient: Wow! I thought you said you extracted without pain.
Dentist: Well, it don't hurt me a bit.

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